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*The Cause of the Lord's Sufferings, and the  
true Nature of the Atonement.*

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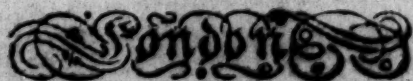
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S E R M O N  
PREACHED  
AT THE  
NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE,  
IN RED-CROSS-STREET,  
NEAR CRIPPLEGATE, LONDON,  
*April 3, 1795=39,*  
On ISAIAH LIII. 5.

BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

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By MANOAH SIBLY, N.H.S.  
AND SERVANT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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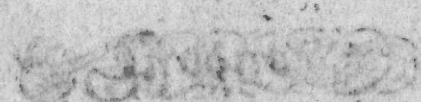
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SERMON IV.

THE

CAUSE OF THE LORD'S SUFFERINGS,

AND THE

TRUE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

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ISAIAH LIII. 5.

*But he was wounded for our transgressions.*

THAT the Lord, when he was in the world, passed through two states; and that the one, which was a state of humiliation, preceded the other, which was a state of glorification, will be evident from a review of what the scriptures, as well the Old as the New Testament, record of him; he being sometimes represented to us in one state, and sometimes in the other; which is the reason of the apparent contradiction to be found therein, in some places, but which

may easily be reconciled, by the mind having a distinct view of these two states. Thus, when the Lord is said, on one hand, to have Jehovah for his Father, that his Father was greater than himself, &c. he is speaking as to his state of humiliation; and when he is said, on the other hand, to be the everlasting Father himself, that he and the Father are one, that the Father is in him, and he in the Father, and that whoever seeth him seeth the Father also, &c. he is speaking as to his state of glorification.

The whole of this 53d chapter of Isaiah is treating of the Lord more particularly in his state of humiliation; the first verse beginning with a lamentation, as it were, of the Lord in his human, saying, *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The appearance of things to the Lord, in his state of humiliation, was such, that it was scarcely manifest that the omnipotence of Jehovah rested upon him. Then follows the description of the vile state in which he appeared in the eyes of those amongst whom he came, for which cause they



they despised him: *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he has no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him: he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* And in the verse immediately preceding our text, we have a farther description of the Lord, in his state of humiliation, as if the divine itself had forsaken him, that is, that it was not in him: *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* But notwithstanding all these appearances, that by his undergoing this state of humiliation, thereby is introduced salvation to man, is fully declared in the words of our text, and the following, **BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS: he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.**

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In opening the subject before us, as contained in our text, it will be proper, first of all, in order that what hereafter will be said, may be more clearly understood, to observe the reason which made it necessary for the Lord to descend into our world at all; which, in one word, was in consequence of the fall; not considering the fall as we heretofore have done, that all mankind are liable to eternal damnation for Adam's transgression,—no—the fall was a gradual decline of mankind from the pure principles of good and truth, in which the Lord regenerated the most ancient or Adamic church, first in thought, then in affection, and lastly the whole man together; whereby it increased in engendering evils and falses to such a degree, that unless Jehovah himself had come, and put himself in a lower degree than that in which he existed in first principles, so that he could have become omnipotent in the very ultimates of his own creation, no flesh could have been saved. In the first place, he could no longer have had a church on earth, because man had sunk himself to such deep states of evil, that  
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the influx of life divine, as coming through the medium of the superior parts of creation only, was too weak to reach him with powerful effect, sufficient to counterbalance the influence from the hells into which he was immersed; whereby all liberty and rationality were destroyed in man, as to the acceptance of good and truth; whence there was no possibility for the Lord to effect his reformation or regeneration, but by his descending and subjugating the hells, from whence the infestation and captivity arose.

It may be asked, Could not the Lord approach, and conquer the hells, without coming into the world?—We answer—No—he could not, without destroying them; for, before the pure principles of Jehovah, both earth and hell must have sunk into annihilation; and in consequence of the church giving way upon the earth, heaven would have fallen, because the church triumphant, with the church militant, form one grand man, the life and soul of which is the Lord; the heavens in that case would have been as a man standing without legs and feet, or as a  
house

house without a foundation, which cannot subsist; the church in the earths being the legs and foundation to the church in the heavens; therefore the Lord says, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.

Having seen the reason of our Lord's assuming our nature, that he might veil his divine glories to subjugate the hells, without consuming them, we may now see the reason of his going through his state of humiliation in our nature, as laid before us in the words of our text, *But he was wounded for our transgressions*; or, as it should be rendered, *But he was wounded or slain from or by reason of our transgressions*.

Here we see that presented before us, which caused our Lord all his anguish of soul, all his trials and temptations, through the course of his tabernacling amongst us, all his bloody sweat, that which ultimately brought him to the accursed tree, nailed his hands and feet thereon, pierced his side, from whence flowed blood and water; whereon, at length, he



he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, namely,—*our transgressions.*

By transgressions we are to understand evil in act,—that is, evil in the external, flowing from a polluted internal; in short, thereby is meant, a wilful breach of either of the ten commandments, which declare plainly and evidently to every man, what evils he ought to shun:—we say, a wilful breach of either of the ten commandments, because he that, without remorse, against light and knowledge, breaks one, will not hesitate, if opportunity offers favourable to his lusts and concupiscences, to break the whole: the reason is, because each one is within the bounds of divine order; that is, they are given us, in order that we, by observance of them, may keep our lives within the bounds of divine order; and if we once step aside—once bring our minds to break one, without remorse, we can break all; and the cause that we may not rush alike into all, is not that our internals are more in agreement with one evil than another, but some suit our constitutions, our habits, or

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our connections in life more than others; those the man rushes into, whilst the others are avoided, from external causes—fear of loss of health—bodily shame—dishonour—loss of wealth, or punishment. It is fear alone that keeps the evil man from rushing into every external enormous evil, and not the love of the opposite good; for as one good affection carries all good affections within it's bosom, so one evil is the epitome of all evil affections: every good affection being excited by an angel, who is an image of heaven in it's least form, and every evil affection being excited by a devil, who is an image of hell in it's least form; therefore we are told, in James ii. 10, *That whoever shall offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Not that because a man has broke one, therefore in act and deed he has broke all; but he is guilty of breaking all in affection and thought, thinking the keeping of them as of no importance,—that they were only given to check man in his sensual delights and carnal pleasures, therefore, on equal practicable occasions, he would break all.

Behold,



Behold, my brethren, the picture of man by nature, and also the amazing love and condescension of the great Jehovah, the only God of heaven and earth, manifested, in descending from heaven,—taking upon himself the ultimates of his own creation, that therein (wonderful to be related!—love beyond every degree of human conception!) he might be wounded or slain, by reason of our transgressions. Do we ask, how this was done?—It was done in the Word; and as it was in the Word, it was also in the reception of the divine influx.

The Lord is slain by reason of our transgressions in the Word, when it's goods and truths are brought to confirm positions which favour evil lusts, and false persuasions. This cannot be otherwise with the evil man; for however he may have the Word in his hand equally with the good, yet, whilst the latter uses it to confirm his love and faith in what is good and true, the former uses it to confirm his affection and confidence in what is evil and false.

He is slain by reason of our transgressions, in regard to truth, inasmuch as an evil man will not believe, from his heart, that Jesus Christ is the only God of heaven and earth; that in him the human and the divine are one, as body and soul;—some other God will be approached, either an imaginary Deity in the heavens, or Nature herself as God.

The Lord is equally slain by reason of our transgressions, in regard to good, because an evil man will not—cannot agree to the position, that good actions ought to be done, because they are of the Lord, and lead to heaven. Such, in no wise, can separate in their minds the idea of merit from good works, when performed by man; from their state of evil, being unable to form any true conception of receiving and doing good from the Lord, and yet as of themselves; therefore they can close in with no other idea of justification but as by faith alone: and that is the reason why, in these last times, when iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold, when evils and errors increase



crease on every hand, that faith alone is the darling doctrine of the day. Let but a preacher come forth with that doctrine, stoutly and strongly, he will not fail to have many admirers; because men, by nature, love to think that they can be saved in their sins—that they can hold their sins in one hand, and their justifying faith in the other. But it would be well to consider, that such, by their transgressions, slay the Lord of life and glory,—that is, they slay all goodness and truth in the Word; it is to them the same as if it did not teach them at all: for whatever they see concerning truth, they refer it to their abstract ideas of Deity—their imaginary phantom; and whatever they see relating to good works, they refer it to their justifying faith. Thus truth and goodness are both wounded by them,—nay, they are to them the same as if extinct.

The Lord is not only slain by the transgressions thus in his holy Word, but also in his influx divine; whereby he is continually present with man, to support him in life, existence, and power. It is true, the influx  
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flows pure from him, but it is varied in every creature according to it's reception; by all wilful transgressions it is perverted; it's nature may be fitly exemplified by the beams of the sun of the natural world, which, as to it's own nature, is always the same; the difference is in the receiving subject, which invariably converts it's beams into it's own nature; the same sun bringing forth, nourishing, and supporting the poisonous herb as well as the medicinal one; the difference is in the subject, and not in the sun, nor it's rays. The case holds parallel with the sun of the spiritual world, from and by whose spiritual beams all live who live, each creature in heaven, earth, and hell, converting the influx therefrom into it's own nature; to the pure all things are pure, and to the impure all things are impure; evil being that which is contrary to the Lord, suffocates the divine influx in itself, and perverts it, changing what is otherwise pure into impurity; still the cause is not in the beaming influx, much less in the Lord, the first fountain from whom it proceeds, but in man, because in the reception thereof, by the transgressor, the



the Lord thereby is slain; that is, the life which the Lord wishes to communicate is turned into death, the good and truth that he desires to enter into his creature with, in order to conjoin him with himself, is suffocated in the reception, and thereby turned into what is evil and false.

The Lord was thus completely slain, by reason of transgressions, to all intents and purposes, both as to his Word and his influx in the world, at the end of the Jewish church; and therefore we also see him, when he could no longer remove the impediments to man's salvation, as he existed in pure Jehovah, coming down amongst us, his divine glories being veiled, and suffered that to be done to himself which had been done to his holy Word and his influx of life in man, whereby he was literally as well as mystically slain by reason of our transgressions, and was thus slain that the scriptures might be fulfilled,—that his death might be our life—that by falling he might conquer and subjugate the hells for ever, by the display of his omnipotence. It was this that brought him to suffer

fer at length on the ignominious cross; not that the passion of the cross alone brought redemption to man, any more than any other act of the Saviour's life, but was only, as it were, the finishing stroke; without which the work would have been left incomplete.

It was our transgressions, as part of the fallen human race, that brought him down to earth. The case was so situated with mankind, that if he had not come at the fulness of time, of which all the prophets spake, and wrought out redemption, such an impending destruction was at hand, and threatened every creature, that all mankind would have perished; but, adored be his name, he has come, and completed our redemption from the powers of hell; to do which he was obligated, according to his own divine order, to take upon himself our sins and iniquities; not bearing them in our room and stead—not taking away the sting from evil, that it cannot affect those for whom he died, —no—that is a doctrine not to be found in the genuine sense of the Word; it is an invention



vention of men, and will not stand the test of rationality,—I mean, the mind simply directed to Jehovah Jesus, as the only Lord and God of heaven and earth; and however, also herein may be considered, the atonement which our Saviour made, by his sufferings and death, to satisfy the Father's wrath against those for whom he died; it is certainly, if viewed by the light of the Word, a most capital mistake. The atonement consists in our receiving a benefit in consequence of what the Lord endured and suffered here below. Is it asked, Wherein that particular benefit consists?—It is in ridding the world of spirits of the devils and satans, who whilst there perverted and adulterated his influx, in it's descent to man on earth, as was done generally before his first and second coming, whereby a spiritual contagion took place amongst the souls of men. And the same atonement now consists in still guarding from their malice and wrath, who would, were they not prevented by an omnipotent arm, so suffocate man by their pestilential sphere surrounding him, that nothing of spiritual life should be able to be received

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by him, whence his eternal salvation would be impossible to be effected. But this our Saviour and Deliverer mercifully prevents; he that is the watchman of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. In this respect we may say, as in David, "I will lay me down in peace together and sleep, for thou Lord alone makest me to dwell in safety;" and though an host encamp against us, we need not fear, for he that is for us is more than all they that are against us: he will suffer no man to be tempted beyond measure; for the wrath of man and devils shall praise him, and the remainder he will restrain.

That this is the true meaning of the nature of the atonement, will be evident, from the consideration of the atonement under the Mosaic œconomy; the atonement there not being made according to the modern opinion, for appeasing the Father's wrath, (and which idea has come into the church, through the reception of justification by faith alone,) but as a representation of the Lord's deliverance of a person or thing from evil, that is, from the power of evil spirits. We pray for  
this.



Serm. IV.] THE LORD'S SUFFERINGS. 19

this atonement in the Lord's prayer, when we say, *Deliver us from evil*. It was for this end that the priests were atoned for, the altars, the congregation; which, as a representative of the spiritual things of the church, had the effect of a prayer that the Lord would deliver from the power and influence of evil spirits; so that man's power to co-operate in his own salvation might not be impeded, that he might not totally be hurried down the stream of sin and iniquity without being able to receive the power from the fountain of all life to resist the evil and chuse the good.

That the true meaning of an atonement in the Word, is, a deliverance to man from the power and influence of evil spirits, more than he can resist, and which if not removed by the Lord, spiritual death and damnation would inevitably ensue, may be more fully exemplified by an example; for which purpose we will refer to Numbers xvi. 41. We are told that *the people murmured against Moses and against Aaron*; for which (v. 44) they were afflicted with a plague; to obtain a

deliverance therefrom (v. 46) Moses said unto Aaron, *Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun;* (v. 47) *and Aaron did as Moses commanded, and made an atonement for the people;* (v. 48) *and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.* Here it may clearly be seen, that the atonement consisted, in the natural view, in delivering the people from the plague; and in the spiritual view, from the malice and wrath of the infernals, who have no greater delight than to destroy mankind both soul and body. The reason why this was effected by incense, was, because incense signifies the worship of the Lord from spiritual love, from whence comes all protection to the soul against the hosts of hell; because in this love the Lord himself is present, and as man increases therein he grows strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and is more able to resist and defy the assaults from hell.

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Serm. IV.] THE LORD'S SUFFERINGS. 21

That the Lord thus made an atonement for men in general, at the time of his advent, was the reason, in the spiritual sense of the Word, of his being wounded or slain, by reason of our transgressions ; for in so doing he had to undergo temptations of various kinds, assaults from all the hells, because they wished and hoped to destroy even the Lord of life himself ; and in the Lord thus bearing our iniquities, in contending with the infernal hosts, in fighting our battles, to appearance he dies ; but it is only in appearance ; nay, less in appearance than when man dies, for man leaves his flesh and bones behind him, rises only as a pure spirit, but the Lord made his very flesh and bones divine ; not that we are to consider that in any shape he is a material man, or elevated the material flesh and bones to himself, but the divine human which was the MAN from all eternity burst forth from the barriers of the material and maternal human, and came forth into its own pristine eternal glories, every assumed principle besides being so dispersed as not to be found. Therefore now in him alone man is God, and God is man ; not as a material,

terial, but a divine man. In going through this work it necessarily led to the death of the maternal human, that thereby the divine human might come forth in it's full glory; that is, it led him to the last temptation, the passion of the cross, when the boasts of the infernal hosts were the loudest, exultingly supposing that they had crushed him under their feet; but whilst they supposed him dead, (as was the case with the two disciples who came to the tomb) whilst they thought their reign safe and certain, behold he rises, for his death was his life, their slaying the maternal human was made the very means of elevating the divine human to the divine, from whence he came; whereby having established his footstool on the lowest ground, and from the lowest having risen to the highest, he is able to affect the hearts of all men immediately from himself, and save the very chief of sinners.

Thus we see the Lord wounded or slain by reason of our transgressions; that it was our transgressions that first brought him down from his unseen glories; that it was  
our



our transgressions that caused him to endure all the sufferings he underwent here below, the dire temptations from all the infernal hosts, that he might well say, as prophetically recorded of him in Lam. xviii. 12, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow:* that it was our transgressions that caused him to endure the passion of the cross, there to bow the head and give up the ghost. And let us remember, he is still slain by reason of our transgressions, whenever we sin against our conscience, or against the light and knowledge of what is good and true, as derived from the holy Word; we then crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame; that is, we affect his name with disgrace and reproach; we wound him to the death of our souls in his spirit and Word, by turning that which in it's own nature is life, and which when received pure leads to life and immortality, into death; and thereby introducing upon ourselves a state of spiritual death. Hence, though we do not crucify the Lord of life and glory personally, because no longer surrounded with an infirm nature,  
but

but being now fully glorified is beyond our sphere, yet to the utmost within our power we effect the same whenever we transgress the divine commands laid down in his holy Word, and adhere not to the influence of his blessed spirit; and were he now upon earth, we should, like the Jews of old, do the same by correspondence unto himself. Let us then beware of wilfully committing evil, because it not only slays our own souls, but also slays the Lord; that is, brings us into a state of spiritual death, and slays every remains of good and truth with which the Lord has inspired us.

Now to our Lord Jesus Christ be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

END OF SERMON IV.

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